

1822

Dec. 2.

No 18

P. R. Triplett

To No 4 Sennett Papered March

Nathaniel Chapman M.D. 8<sup>th</sup> 1827

Professor of the Institutes and Practice of Physic  
& Clinical Practice in the University of  
Pennsylvania.

And to

William C. Horner M.D.

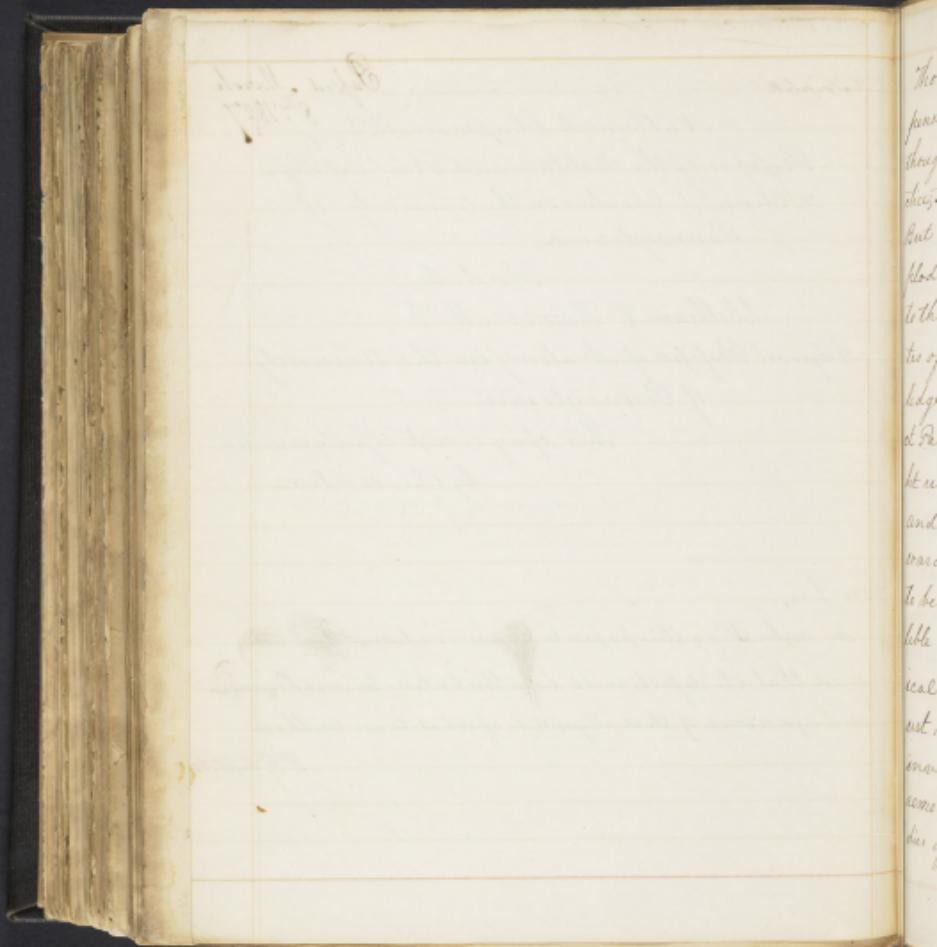
Adjunct Professor of Anatomy in the University  
of Pennsylvania

This paper is respectfully inscribed  
by the writer.

Dear Sirs,

In submitting this paper to examination, I feel ass-  
ured that its defects will be attributed to inexperience  
and ignorance of that etiquette so essential to an author.

P. R. Triplett.



## The Theory of Menstruation

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though theory in many instances may be dispensed of, in the treatment of many diseases and thought not essential to an efficient & successful practice; the archives of medicine abundantly testify. But this has been the offspring of Empiricism & plodding experience. There is no one so inexorable to the persuasion of truth, or opposed to the dictates of rationality, so violently, as not to acknowledge that sound theoretical principles, and correct Pathological views, are the surest beacons to light us through the Dedalus labyrinth of disease and even aided by those, when we take a backward gaze on memory, plain we shall too often have to bewail the non-efficacy of the most infallible of guides. Theory being based upon physiolog-ical facts, practical deductions therefrom must be of salutary tendency, or at least, not involving any egregious misapplication of remedies, in the treatment of diseases. The maladies of females, have been treated more Empirically;

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Perhaps, than any other diseases in the catalogue of Nosology. Histories of their cure even now are mingled with its deciderating touch, almost inducing the unreflecting, to suppose that they are not subject to the same laws of the animal economy, alike in health and disease that men are; and that their ailments are not amenable to the same pathology; variously modified. Mistrust however since the dawn of the first knowledge on the subject has, attracted alike the attention of the wise, and the otherwise, and diversified hypotheses have at different times been fabricated of its cause and phenomena. In the days of superstition and ceremonial Idolatry, when things incomprehensible and apparently mysterious, were attributed to supernatural agency, and the sun, moon and stars worshiped as Deities, the doctrine of lunar influence was established, and though fraught with glaring absurdities, obtained for many years, and was adhered to by its advocates.

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with a pertinacity, that, not unfrequently characterizes the jealous and misjudging Bigot in every age. This hypothesis like most of the vague opinions of older time, has no longer a resting place in the annals of authentic history. It was attacked by the genius of Galen who soon exposed its fallacies, and raised it to its foundation, and erected on its ruin, the Doctrine of general plethora the more specious in its argument, and not so easily refuted, as the preceding one; yet it is not ~~by~~ foreign of the true cause. There are other ~~Hypothes~~ <sup>Hypothesis</sup> ~~valant~~, as Fermentation, Permeation, Incalcescence, which are too preposterous and weak, to merit even the slightest comment. Topical congestion the doctrine of the celebrated Buller has yet its partisans, and no doubt will continue to have; for it is plausible and ingenious, tho' it is wanting in perspicuity and devoid of consistency; and is now deservedly exploded, and in conjunction with all the preceding, is consigned to the

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Tomb of the Caputis (as a late writer has happily quoted) never to be disinterred. The present popular and received doctrine of the schools is that of Secretion, with whom this originated I believe is not settled, the credit has been conceded generally to John Hunter, tho' it is stated there are others whose pretensions are equally warrantable, as Haller, Bordau and Saunders, this point I shall render to others for Settlement as it accords not with the province of this paper suffice it to say, we believe it to be a secretion, not pure blood elicited from its citadel by some mysterious power resident in the moon: nor to account for it rationally are we driven to the humiliating and egregious resource of chemical fermentation or lachrymous propensity: nor are we limited in support of this doctrine to the ipsedictum of any one man, for we have a fabric of testimony to its maintenance of no flimsy or hectoring texture, while we have the conspicuous names so

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Recently enumerated, as its base we have the superstructure of men not less eminent, who are hastening on with rapid studies, to the pinnacle of medical glory, amongst whom I am proud mention— Those of my own country—Where we wanting in the attestations of those high authorities in support of the position, a candid and impartial examination in to the facts of the case would be sufficient to its substantiation. Any one conversant with the anatomical structure and Physiology of the uterus must readily perceive its adaptation to the province of generation, we find recorded in the immortal Hales Physiology strong intimation of this fact: he says "The arteries are numerous and lax, the veins small and rigid." Independently of this organization of the uterus, its being subject to the laws and discourses of the glandular system, is evidence almost irreproachable of its identity of function. Its being urged in opposition to the Parenchymatous structure of the uterus, its simple conformation, proves nothing;

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For the Stomach is not more complex than the uterus, and it secretes the liquor gastricus in large quantities, and there are many surfaces of very simple texture in the system, that performe the office of secretion, tho' the matter elaborated by time and other circumstances, is variously modified. The uterus it is well known is liable to all the maladies common to the glandular apparatus, as schirrhœa, cancer, &c. It is also subject to anomalies and vitiated in a disfunction, which is the case with all glands. When they first commence their secretory action as is evinced in the seminal organs of the male &c. as respect the final cause & per oodical returns of the calamenia there is nothing satisfactory, all that we can say, is that it is governed by the edict of Natures God, and gives the uterus an aptitude for conception, or in other words it keeps open the uterine. So when the female conceives, that the membranes can be secreted, and through their medium the circulation kept up between the

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mother and fetus, in some mode or other which is congenital to its development and increment in *utero*. The menses being a fluid *sui generis*, not pure blood or uterine hemorrhage as was formerly supposed, but a genuine secretion, as the most able investigation, have resulted in proving having neither colour or coagulability common to the blood drawn from the arm of the individual, and chemically analyzed offers different results. If it were red blood poured out of the uterine arteries would not the mere inducing of pethaea in suppision restore them, and in excessive flow, would not the intervention of depletion, arrest the profusion. That these systems of treatment do not obtain, every practitioner must be fully aware. Then it is, by a more complicated plan of treatment we have to opail its derangements, and we often find the most skillful baffled in the attempt, such as the difficulties to be encountered.

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## AMENORRHEA

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In treating of the diseased state of the menstrual action I shall follow for the sake of system the nosological arrangement of authority, which comprehends several varieties, - firstly, *amenorrhœa mensum*, or retention of the menses, secondly, *suppœcio mensum*, or suppressed menses, thirdly that of *amenorrhœa difficultior* or painful menstruation. By the first of these diseases, we would wish to be understood, as meaning a tardy appearance of the catamenia, or where they shall not have taken place at that period of female life which is usually anticipated; but this passage, of relative signification. For while we see some women pass this supposed crisis, (which is altogether arbitrary) without any symptoms of menstruation and without detriment to their health, we see others who commence long before the expected time. Then, we should lay it down as a law never to be infacted, that unless the non-appearance of the catamenia

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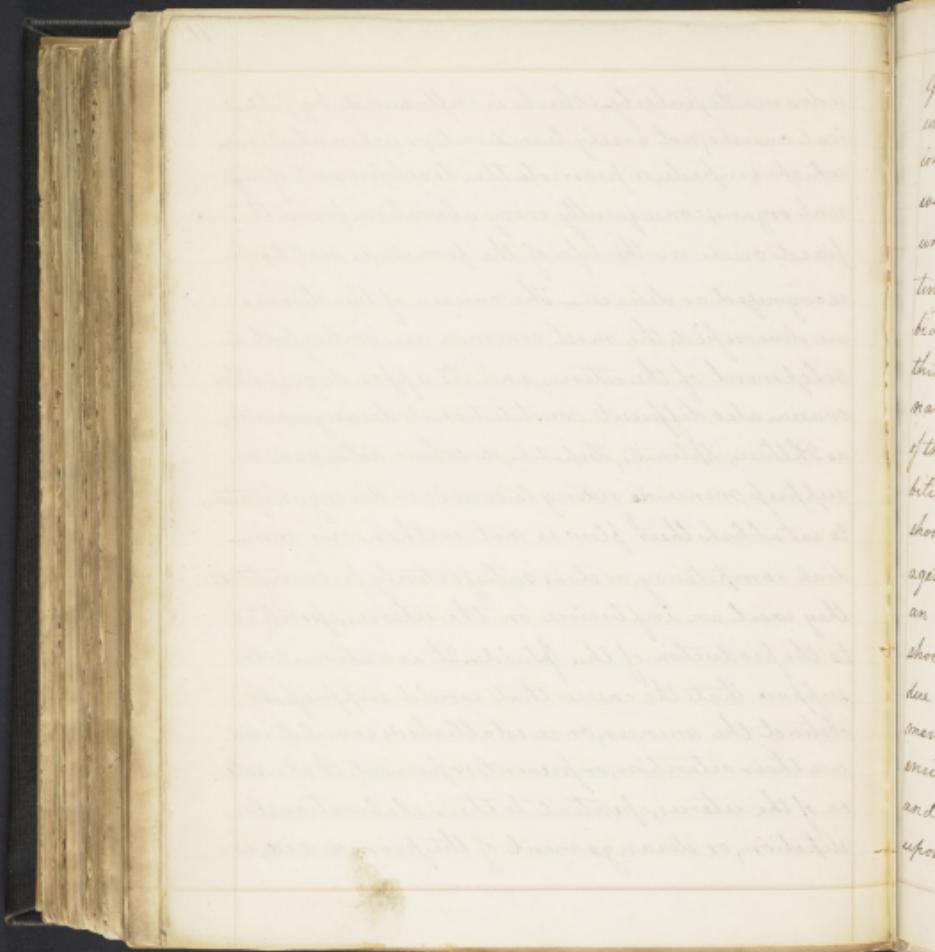
should induce constitutional disturbance, to urge our attention, we should never interfere as we believe there has been immoderate at the alter of officiousness, many fair and interesting victims, for the want, merely of a knowledge of that plan of treatment, denominated Negative, which is often the most judicious as well as the most successful - Consulted in a case of supposed emansio Mensium, we should never prescribe for it, as actual disease, unless, attended by some of the subsequent characteristics of the disease, as mentioned by authors, such as, "Latitude and debility, aversion to exercise, pale, yellow complexion, edema of the feet and legs, constipation, dyspeptic symptoms, as acidity, flatulence, loathing of food, craving of lime, chalky pain of the head, loins, or back, tumid abdomen, with Hysteric symptoms, as palpitation, dyspnoe &c. This is an exigent state of things and if not removed, is apt to eventuate in Hydroptic or Palmonous affection.

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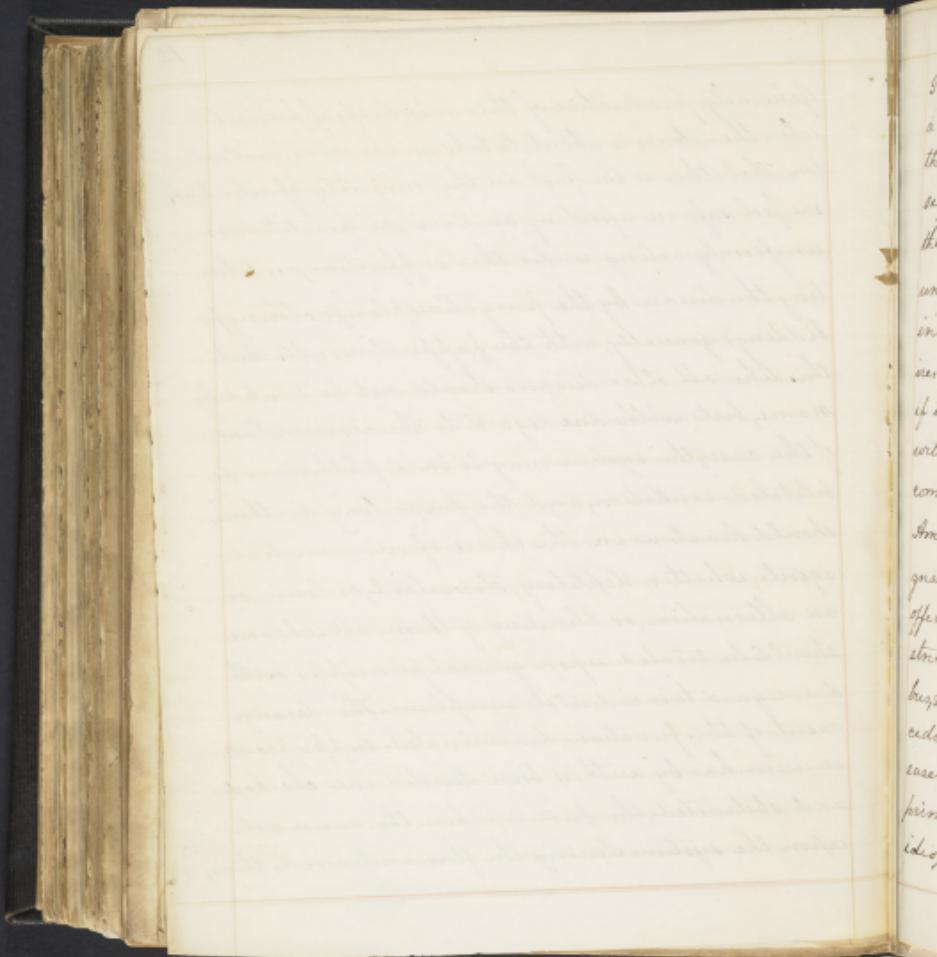
Some of the preceding symptoms, are the best criteria, to conduct us to a conclusion, whether the flow should be elicited by our aid, or not. For under those circumstances of disease, their appearance is essential to the health and comfort of the female. The menstrual period in the healthy is very much influenced by circumstances, as Climate Idiosyncasy &c. In tropical countries, as Africa &c. it commences at an early period; even nine or ten years, being copious, and of protracted duration, the cessation takes place also at a much earlier period of life. While in the frigid and bleak country of Lapland, the women begin later in life, and cease later, not commencing till twenty or twentyfive. But in the more temperate clime of Europe or America, this phenomenon is generally anticipated about the 14 or 15 year, and ends about the 45 year. So there are many deviations from this supposed time, which may be attributed to a slow or accelerated

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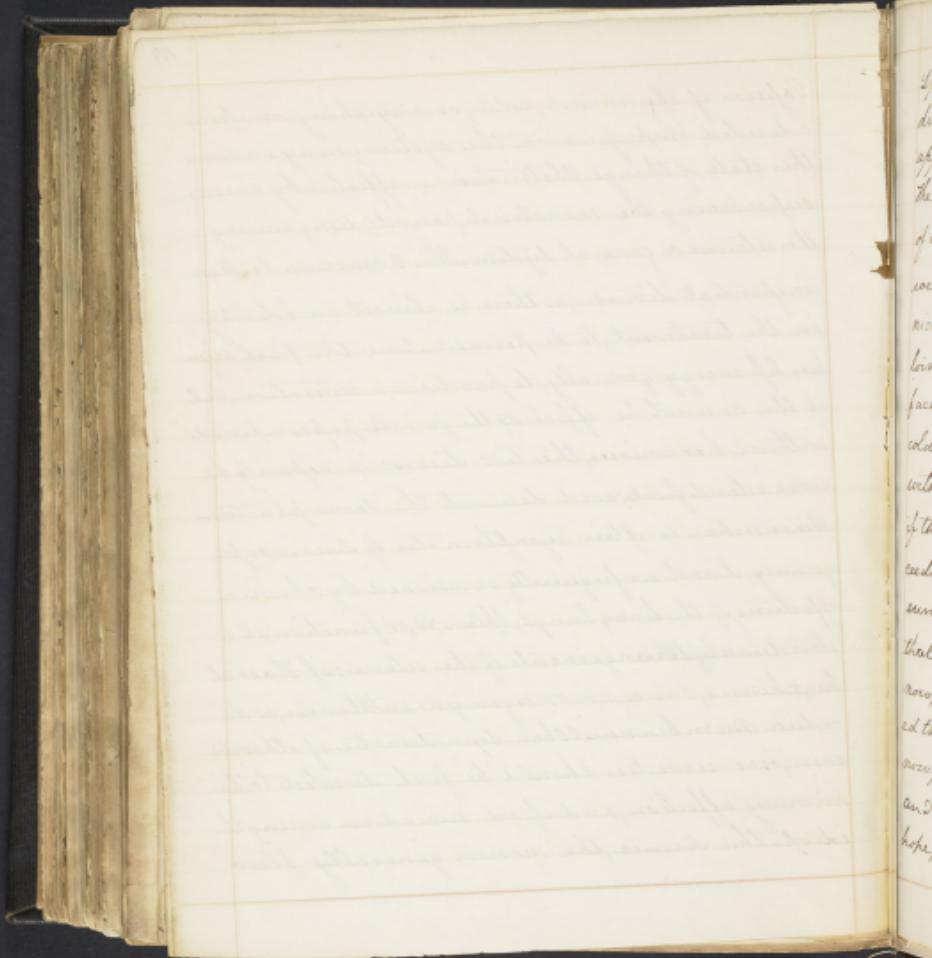
advance to puberty - which is influenced by physical causes, not easily traced out, or accounted for, which impede, or promote the development of different organs; consequently every aberration from this fixed crisis in the life of the female, is not to be recognized as disease - The causes of this disease are diversified, the most common are imperfect development of the uterus, and its appendages, as the ovaria, also different constitutional derangements, as Phthisis, Splenitis, Hepatitis, &c where retained or suppressed menses are owing to ovarian disorganization, to establish their flow is not within our remedial competency, as it is satisfactorily proven, that they exert an influence on the uterus, essential to the production of the fluids. It is rational to suppose that the cause that would suppress, & obstruct the menses, once established, would induce their retention, or prevent or pervert that action of the uterus, essential to their elaboration. Constipation, or derangement of the prima via, is



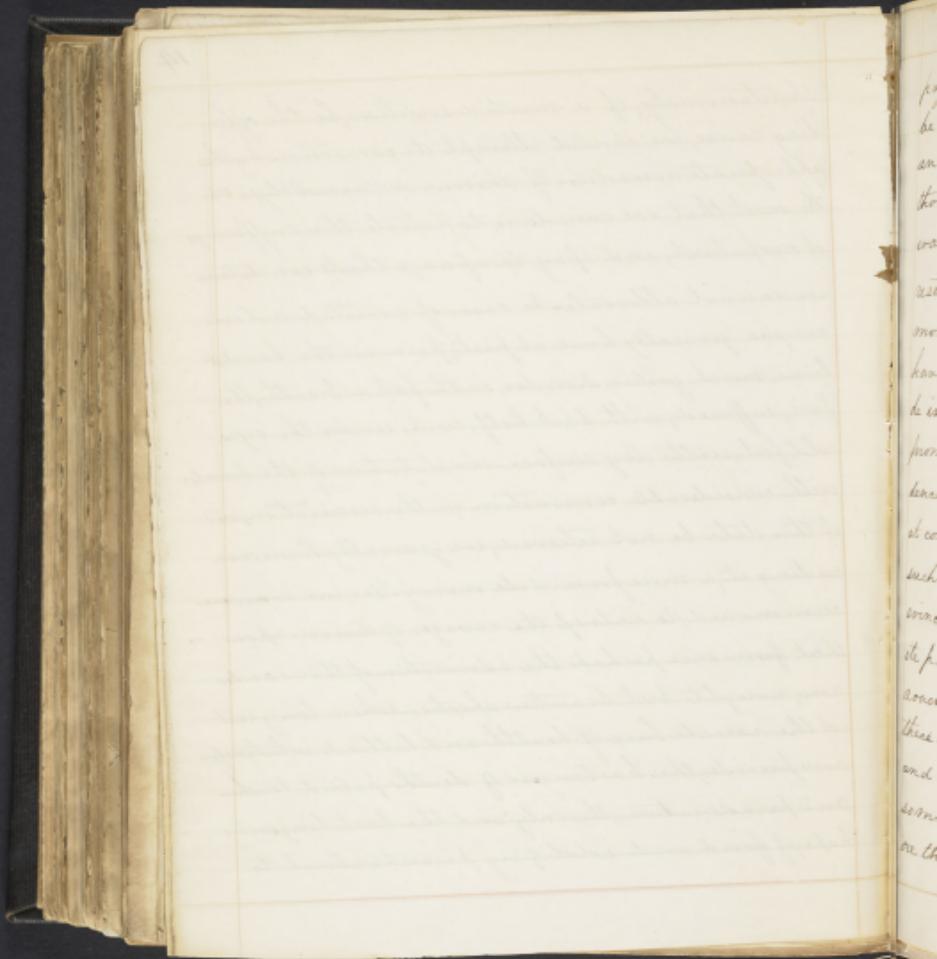
Generally productive of this mischief, if present when the uterus is about to take on the menstrual action. That this is the fact in the majority of retentions, we feel safe in asserting; and we see practitioners uniformly acting under this supposition, and treating the disease by the purgative plan (nothing but bleeding) generally, with the happiest results. But this like all other diseases should not be treated by name, but with due regard to the circumstances of the case, the system may be in a plethoric or debilitated condition, and the prevailing diathesis, should direct us in the choice of our remedial agents, whether, depurative, stimulant, or tonic, or an alternation, or blending of them all. Chlorosis should be treated upon general principles, with due regard to incidental symptoms. The derangement of this function, denominated, suppuration enervium has by authors been divided into checked, and obstructed, the first is, where the cause acts upon the system during the flow, and arrest, them,



Spirits of the mind, cold, or any thing making a decided impression on the system, may induce this state of things. Obstruction is effected by causes supervening the menstrual period, disorganizing the uterine or general system. This I conceive to bear unessential division, as there is almost an identity in the treatment, to be pursued, 'till the first requires energy generally, to produce a restoration, but if this cannot be effected, the female passes a period without her course, the two diseases necessarily be come identified, and demand the same practice. Amenorrhœa is often symptomatic of disease, or pregnancy, it is not unfrequently occasioned by chronic affections of the Liver, Lungs, Spleen, &c, or functional or structural changes of the uterus; of Fluorid bæxhæmæ, cancer, or organized substances, as the endometrium. When symptomatic of other diseases, our remedies should be first directed to the primary affection, and if we succeed in curing the idiopathic disease, the menses generally flow.



Spontaneously, if a morbid secretion, be the offending cause, we should attempt its correction by the appropriate remedies. If scirrus or Cancer, & Spleen &c. the most that we can do, is to palliate the sufferings of our patient, and spay to apace that condition we cannot alleviate. In cases of arrested catarrh, we generally have at first, pain in the head & loins, much gastric disorder, with fetid breath, the face, suffused, with dark half circle, under the eyes, cold feet, with dry surface. constipation of the bowels, with considerable commotion in the circulation, and if this state be not relieved, we generally have exceeding it, a more formidable enemy. Yet, we soon are summoned, to witness the ravages of disease upon that form once perhaps the admiration of thousands, now, wrought but beauties spectre, where long rest ed the roseate hue of health and liveliness, whilom, now presides, the harbinger of death; pallid touch and peradventure, the only and the last lingering hope, of fond and idolizing parents, about to



pass the threshold of irreversible fate - what must be their anxiety, their solicitude for their condition and further ask how pleasurable must be the thought, how consoling the reflection, of him, who was instrumental in rescuing an object, so late resting, so, beloved from the relentless grasp of mortality - When symptoms urgent as those we have enumerated exist, no hesitation should be made in resorting to the Lancet, as affording the most prompt & efficient means of relief - according to the evidence of practitioners on this subject, it is worthy of great confidence, and we pleasure signs coinciding with such authority, for we have seen it more than once evincing the influence of a charm - relieving exquisitely pain of the loins & head, involving a state approaching that of Phrenitis - relaxing the surface where there was much preternatural heat and dryness - and in a word, bettering the condition of the patient so much, as to conduce to repose, and ultimately rest ore the sufferer catamenia - Unfortunately for the

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fair surfaces, under this affliction. We can seldom boast of such easy conquests. Often we have to call in all the auxillary means of depletion, as promoting, purging, sweating, and blistering; in all sthenic cases, we should adopt this plan, wholly or in part, as circumstances may require; before recourse is had to Commenagoes, the want of attention to this one simple, tho' important principle, in their administration, has been the source of multiplied error, and the spring of all contention, in opinions of their virtue. This class of remedies, like many others, requires a union in action between their specific action and the mobility of the sanguiferous system; we all know that high action, even retards the operation of an emetic, or purge, and when they do operate, often tend to aggravate the symptoms, they were designed to relieve. This indiscriminate use of remedies, this treating of disease, by rule and recipe, is the only robbery you read, on which we can extenuate or reconcile the off-  
going statements, of so many respectable physicians.

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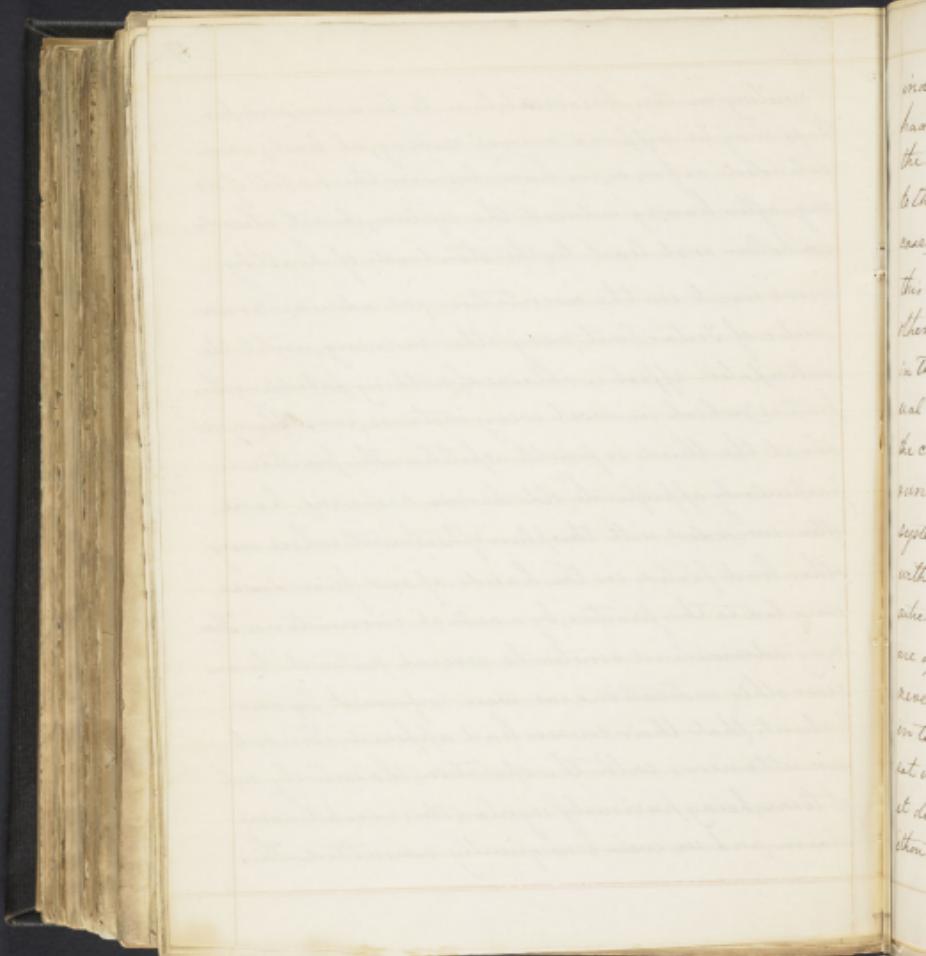
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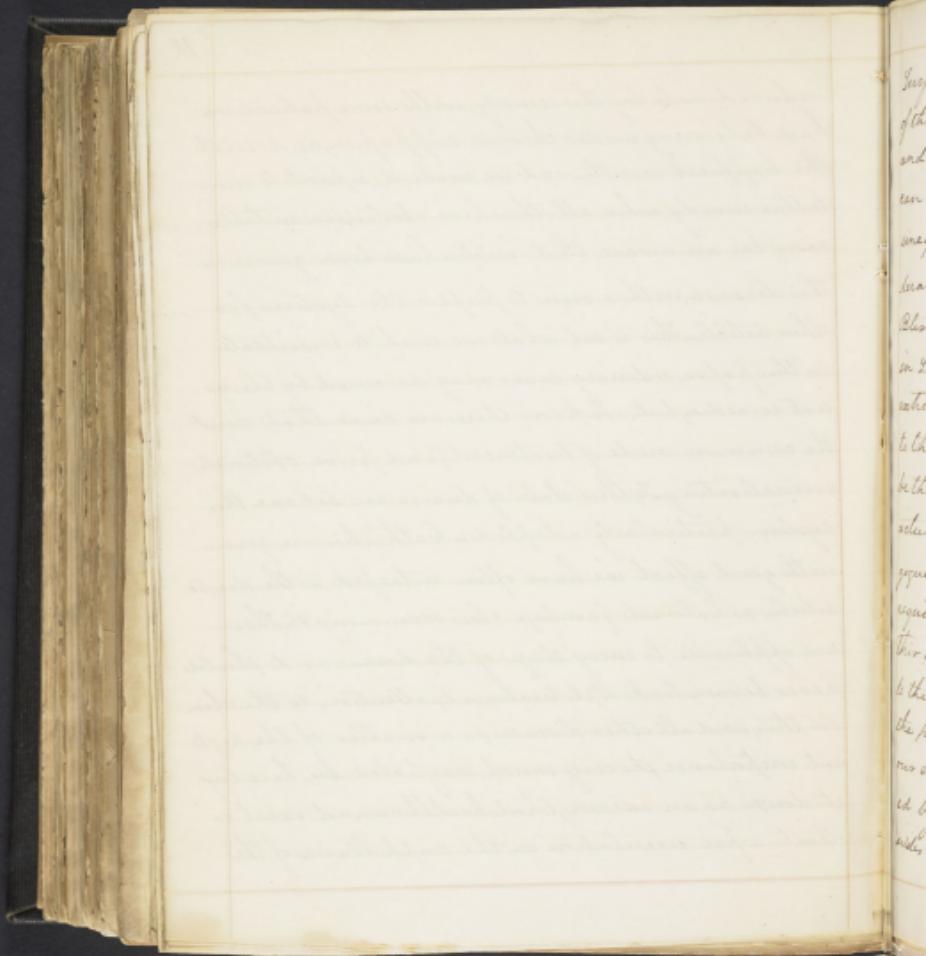
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Vomiting in this disease we believe to be a new, and perhaps may be supposed a novel remedy, at least, when extended as far as we have been in the habit of doing—after having reduced the system, if not already so below or at least to the standard of healthy movement in the circulation, we administer an emetic of Tartar Emet; every other morning, until the anticipated effect is obtained (nothing forbidding this practice) which in most every instance, was obtained about the third or fourth repetition. This practice is particularly appropriate, <sup>in</sup> old chronic cases, we have often succeeded with this plan of treatment, where every other had failed in the hands of our friends. We were led to this practice, by a casual circumstance. Having administered emetics to several patient to answer other indications, we were informed by our patients, that their courses had appeared, almost simultaneous with the operation, the entirely out of time, being previously regular, this excited some alarm, and we were consequently consulted. This



induced us to try the remedy, with some patients we  
had labouring under chronic suppuration, and with  
the happiest results - and we make it a point to occur  
to this remedy when all others have aborted (in suitable  
cases) we are aware that emetics have been given in  
this disease, with a view to prepare the system for  
other articles. This is not what we wish to inculcate  
in this paper, ordinary cases may be cured by the us  
ual remedies, but, we know there are cases that resist  
the common mode of treatment, and prove obstinate  
and relapsing. To this state of disease we believe this  
system particularly adapted - Cathartics are given  
with good effect we have often witnessed as the drastic  
articles as Calomel, Gamboge, aloes, scammony &c. These  
are applicable to every stage of the disease and should  
never be overlooked. Its treatment, attention to the skin  
in this, and all other diseases, is a matter of the high  
est importance the very much neglected. We here lay  
it down as an axiom, that health cannot exist w  
thout a free circulation in the capillaries of the



Surface. There is no affection perhaps where the function of the surface is more implicated, than in aminoshea, and must always be restored before that equilibrium can exist in the circulation, so essential to Health, the unequal distribution of which, invariably produces derangement, more or less of the whole machine. Blisters are sometimes used with decided efficacy in Suppeditio mensurum, sometimes applied to the extremities, on the principle of reversion, at others to the sacrum, as a local stimulant; this appears to be the better practice, of either we know nothing from actual experience. In the administration of Emmena zygues, so much discrimination and circumspection are required, that we are almost compelled to retire from their consideration, doubting our capacity to do justice to the subject, as well asured by the responsibility of the province. We shall mention those articles, which our experience has tested; and those most commend ed by authors: Those which we have tried, are first: Bartschides in combination with the other articles & Polygala Longa,

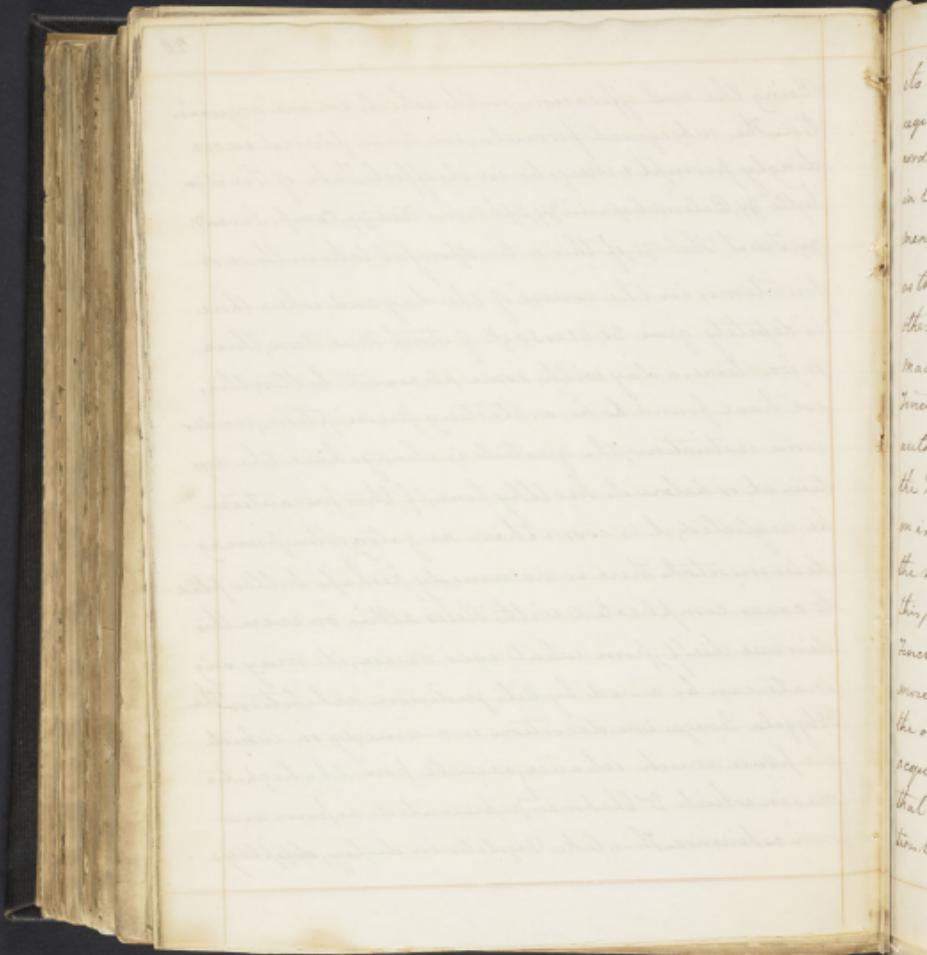
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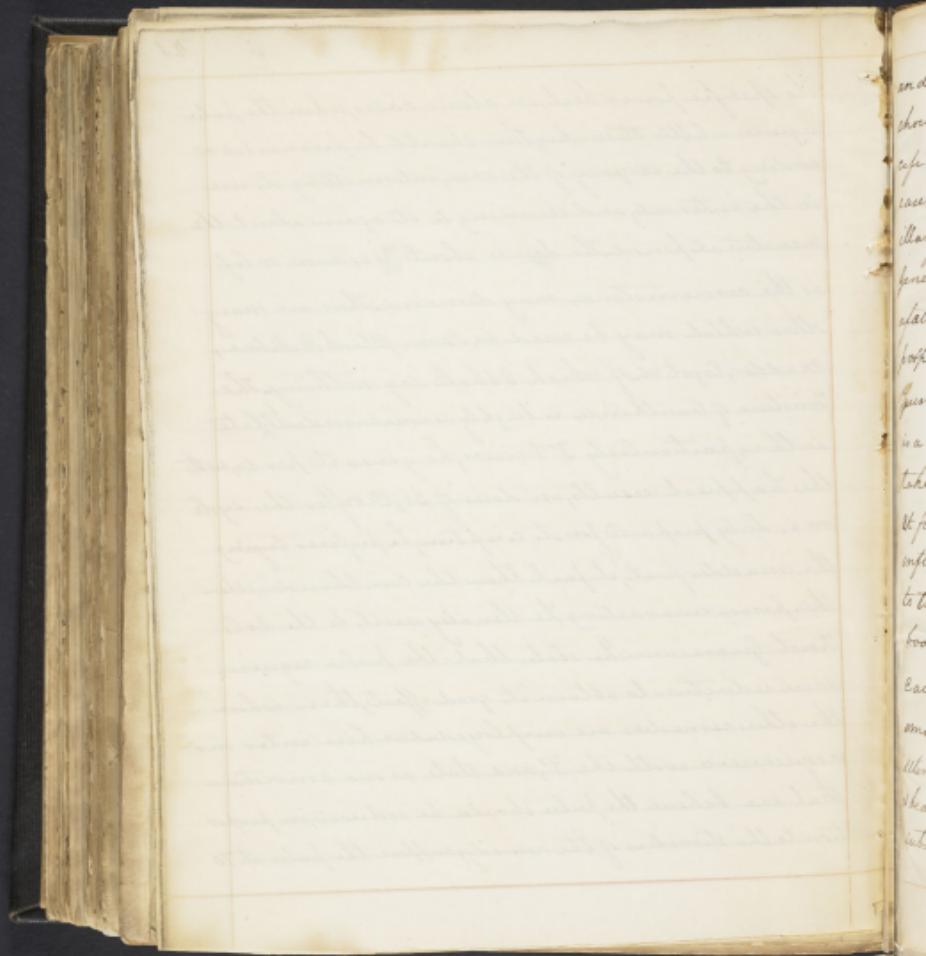
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Being the most efficacious, with which we are acquainted. The subsequent formula, we have found exceedingly prompt & energetic in its effect. Take of Tincture  
Lytle 3ij, Balsam Coparia 3ij, 2pt Cornu Antizy, Comp. Linseed: 3ij, Tinct. Thib: 3i, of this a tea-spoonful taken three or four times, in the course of the day and where there is debility give 30, 40 or 50 gts. of Tinct Mus. Fern, three or four times, a day with some pleasant balsom, we have found to be a sterling prescription, under some restrictions, the greatest is always have the system at or below its healthy tone, if this precaution be neglected, it is worse than nugatory often proving delmentative. There is no remedy perhaps better fitted to cases complicated with *Flor albus*, or even this disease itself, from what ever cause, it may originate can be cured by art, judicious exhibition. The *Polygona Senega* in a decoction is a remedy on which we place much reliance, as well, from the high testimonies in which Dr Chapman <sup>has</sup> represented it from our own experience. This, like *Digitalis* in dropsy, employs



its specific power best, in atonic cases, where the pulse requires a little stimulus. This should be premised according to the exigency of the case, intermitting its use in the interval, and recurring to it again about the menstrual period. The dose is about 3j or more or less as the circumstances may demand. There are many other which may be used as, Sassafras, Black Cohosh, Madder, Ergot &c. of which I shall say nothing. The Tincture of Cantharis is highly recommended by late authors, particularly Dr. Ducus, he gives it per os, with the happiest results, in doses of 30gr. after the system is duly prepared for its reception, he prefers trying the madder first, if fail then the Cantharis, when this proves unavailing, he usually resort to the bold Tinct. Guaranum. He states, that the pulse requires more reduction to obtain its good effects, than where the other remedies are employed. We inter our acquiescence with the Dr. and state as our conviction, that we believe the pulse should be reduced, in proportion to the stimulus of the remedy; suppose the pulse at 70



and the stimulating quality of the remedy so the pulse should be reduced to that number, if we wish a specific effect produced on the system. In all these diseases particular regard should be had to all the auxiliary measures, as treating Hysteria, & other symptoms on general principle, as the use of Opium, Camphr, or Capatida, warm local applications, anodyne injections with proper diet, exercise on horse back in good weather, jumping the rope, dancing &c; &c; Dysmenorrhœa, this is a very common & formidable complaint if it may take place any time during the menstruating period. It frequently induces the deepest despondency, and infests the patient with the greatest torture. It presents to the physician agitation, the blackest pictures in the book of life. Cold appears to be the most frequent cause of the disease the secretion of a membrane <sup>the like</sup> resembling the decidua <sup>is</sup> sometimes expelled from the uterus with the most violent contractions, with great pain bearing down effort. this continues until all the extravasated substance is discharged, which comes away sometimes ready

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whole but generally in small fibres or clots called by apathet  
during the paroxysm, we can do little more than mitigate pain,  
to effect <sup>the</sup> cure you anodyne enemata, composed of Laudanum  
camphor &c, also Camphor by the <sup>mouth</sup> according to Dr. D'Avocet, is the  
most effectual remedie to alleviate suffering. To effect a permanent  
cure, the remedies recommended in Suppuration, should  
be interposed between the menstrual periods. Such as Tinct  
Lytle, Tinct Guaiacum, &c. These will seldom fail to afford relief,  
when given under certain restriction, above mentioned—  
they should be persevered in for months or until a cure  
is obtained. Those remedies should be aided by a strict  
attention to diet & moderate exercise; and every thing  
calculated to alter the morbid condition of the uterine  
spleen. We may have occasion to resort to Pt. purging,  
so the matter should be tenaciously attended to, as  
we have before said; it often prevents the due operation  
of our remedie, and not unfrequently hastens the dis-  
ease to an unhappy issue—

P.R. Griffiths



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